



ANG

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Editorial

Oppose Arroyo's repression of the media

Gloria Arroyo is pulling all stops to control the entire state machinery and effectively use it to coerce the people to submit to her dictates and maintain herself in power. She has also launched a grand campaign of deception to justify her prolonged stay in power and create an illusion of progress. She demonizes all forces and sectors opposed to her rule, rationalizing the use of force against them. She resorts to deception, barefaced tactics, bribery and intimidation—all to control and influence mass media and ensure that information coming from them benefits her.

Arroyo has nonetheless failed several times to convince many reporters, broadcasters and columnists to serve her deceptive campaign to prettify her image or conceal information and news that would "besmirch" her rule. Despite Arroyo's threats, however, the mass media, especially those influenced by the opposition as well as ordinary reporters and broadcasters, continue to assert their

freedom of expression.

While the Arroyo regime and its minions control and keep significant sections of the mass media in their payroll, a large number of editors, columnists,



**Highlights
of this issue...**

9 soldiers killed, 20 wounded in NPA ambush in Iloilo

PAGE 3

Evidence presented at CCTA

PAGE 4

Enrile to ravage the forests of Samar anew

PAGE 9

broadcasters and reporters refuse bribes and do not kowtow to the regime's wishes.

More than this, despite Arroyo's maneuvers and threats, she has failed to suppress relevant news that gives prominence to mass actions against her and expose the ruling regime's various lies and its cases of corruption and violence.

In her desperation, Arroyo has used censorship, dirty tactics and fascist threats against the mass media.

She furiously attacked members of the media in their own turf in a speech November 10 before officers of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP). Castigating them for "negative reporting" of news that underscored her regime's corruption, brutality and puppetry and gave vent to exposés and anti-Arroyo protests, she accused the mass media of "allowing itself to be used as pawns in political games of destabilization."

Arroyo strongly condemned the mass media for the prominence and coverage it gave to deliberations of the Citizens' Congress for Truth and Accountability (CCTA). The CCTA is

a forum for presenting pieces of evidence and hearing testimony on the Arroyo regime's corruption, electoral fraud and human rights violations, all of which were suppressed when Congress junked the impeachment case. Despite Arroyo's accusation that CCTA was a "kangaroo court," the media has continued to pay attention to it and feature it prominently on radio, television, print and the internet.

In her annoyance, Arroyo practically branded as "terrorists" media people who refused to toe the line. She has labeled them "hindrances to democracy and progress" and of becoming "a national malaise."

These attacks are but the latest of the Arroyo regime's devious attempts and dirty maneuvers against the mass media. Before this, there were reports of a secret plan by Malacañang to arrest prominent reporters and editors who had openly assailed her illegitimate regime. The arrests were to coincide with the declaration of a "state of emergency."

Arroyo also "implored" Malacañang reporters in a closed-

door meeting last month to avoid reporting news that was critical of her regime because they were "hurtful" tirades against her person. She shrewdly resorted to melodrama to mollify reporters who have long been assailing her spokespersons' lies and her penchant for blaming the mass media for all the regime's "bad publicity".

While Arroyo's maneuvers against the media escalate, media practitioners opposed to the corruption of the reactionary system are relentlessly harassed. Killings of critical, if not progressive, journalists continue. At least 25 media practitioners have been killed since the year 2000. The latest victim was Ricardo Uy, a progressive broadcaster in Sorsogon (*see related news on p. 7*). Each year, the Philippines rises in rank among countries most dangerous for journalists. The Philippines came in second to Iraq last year in terms of the number of journalists killed because of their profession.

The media's freedom and ability to continuously ventilate and disseminate news about the regime and entire reactionary system's corruption and inutility is of utmost importance, especially amid the intense political struggles at present. Valuable information affecting the people's lives and economic status is disseminated through the media, information that may form the basis for analyzing and forming collective decisions crucial to pushing forward democratic processes and social change and even advancing revolution.

Thus, any move by Arroyo to suppress, control and use the media for her own benefit must be utterly resisted not only by members of the media but by the democratic mass movement and the people.

AB

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Contents

Editorial	1
Barefaced coercion	3
Victorious NPA Offensives	
NPA ambush in Iloilo	3
NPA seizes firearms in Mindanao	4
Ambush police in Quezon	4
Evidence presented at CCTA	4
Driven to a corner	6
EVAT and pegged wages	7
Massacre in Pasig	8
Enrile to ravage Samar anew	9
Usi driven out of Northern Samar	10
News	11

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Barefaced coercion

Arroyo directly accused prominent broadcaster Julius Babao last October of providing refuge and financial assistance to suspected terrorist Dawud Santos in a bid to put the squeeze on the Lopez family-owned ABS-CBN, one of the country's biggest television and radio networks. With ABS-CBN becoming increasingly critical of Arroyo, linking Babao and ABS-CBN with alleged terrorists indicates Arroyo's readiness to use everything in her power to cow the mass media.

Babao and ABS-CBN have not capitulated, however. In the same Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) meeting where Arroyo attacked journalists as "bad boys" and instruments of destabilization, ABS-CBN top executive Eugenio Lopez III assailed Arroyo's pressure and baseless accusations against the mass media. He reproved Arroyo for irresponsibly implicating Babao and presented the results of the ABS-CBN's own internal investigation that cleared Babao and exposed how the AFP had lied and distorted information to pressure the broadcaster.

Lopez and ABS-CBN's refusal to submit to Malacañang's control reflects the stand of mass media as a whole to continue thwarting Arroyo's attempts to coerce and intimidate media. In doing so, Arroyo has merely succeeded in expanding the ranks of those opposed to her and firmed up the Filipino people's determination to end her rule.

Journalists, democratic organizations, progressive parties and political oppositionists and even some of Arroyo's own allies within and outside media have condemned and criticized her.

Malacañang's plans this November to pour in millions of pesos from the country's coffers to push to the fore issues that the regime would like to make prominent and manipulate have likewise been exposed. With the purported aim of disseminating necessary information on "bird flu," Arroyo contracted McCann-Ericsson, a big foreign public relations firm, to deliberately make the "bird flu" issue dominate other events and simultaneously portray Arroyo as compassionate, independent-minded and decisive. In addition was the sinister plan to use the rape case involving American soldiers in Subic, Olongapo to reap favorable publicity for Arroyo.

A Malacañang official has disclosed how Arroyo was elated at the fact that for a few days, news about "bird flu" and the Subic rape case diverted the people's attention from the scandals, protest actions and calls for her ouster.

9 soldiers killed, 20 wounded in NPA ambush in Iloilo

Red fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) ambushed elements of the 1st Scout Ranger Battalion (1st SRB) and the Philippine Army 47th IB in Sitio Simabad, Mambiran, Calinog, Iloilo on November 19. Nine military troops were killed and 20 wounded, according to initial reports. The soldiers were on their way home from patrol operations and were riding an Isuzu Elf and a six-wheeler truck when ambushed.

A command-detonated land mine exploded on the passing six-wheeler truck at about 8:00 p.m. This, followed by a hail of bullets, caused most of the enemy's casualties. The explosive, however, did not hit the Elf. Hence, those on board were able to return fire. The exchange of fire lasted for about an hour. Two more soldiers were wounded while no casualties were reported on the NPA side.

The two companies of the 1st SRB led by Col. Noel Buan had just come from Central Visayas and had only been deployed in Panay for over a month. One of its companies is in Negros. (It may be recalled that Buan was an intelligence operative captured by the NPA in Southern Tagalog in 1999 and subsequently released after a year.) The AFP Visayas Central Command had assigned Buan's unit as the 3rd Infantry Division's "strike force" covering Western and Central Visayas.

Prior to this, two soldiers were killed and two others wounded in separate NPA harassment operations under the Napoleon Tumagtang Command in Panay's Southern Front.

A soldier was killed and another wounded when the NPA fired upon elements of the 1st SRB and Charlie Coy of the 47th IB in Sitio Apong, Aningalan, San Remigio, Antique on October 10. The enemy forces were bathing and washing their clothes when the NPA sniped them.

Meanwhile, on October 7, another NPA unit harassed a platoon of the 31st Division Reconnaissance Coy (DRC) having breakfast at around 8 a.m. in an abandoned hut. One soldier was killed and three others wounded.



NPA seizes 21 firearms in Mindanao

NEW People's Army Red fighters confiscated 21 firearms in three separate tactical offensives in the Southern Mindanao region in the second week of November.

Red fighters seized six M16s, five various kinds of short firearms and six ammunition belts without having to fire a single shot when they raided the Philippine National Police (PNP) station in Quezon, Bukidnon on the night of November 11. In a statement, the Merardo Arce Command (NPA-Southern Mindanao) said that the tactical offensive was a joint operation of NPA forces from Front 53 and Front 6.

That same day, at around 2 p.m., a squad from the NPA Magtanggol Roque Command ambushed enemy forces in Sitio Balaganun, Barangay Managa, Bansalan, Davao del Sur, seizing two M16 rifles and an M14 from two wounded CAFGU elements and a regular soldier of the 57th IB who surrendered. The soldier was identified as Dennis Capilio. The wounded CAFGU elements were administered first aid by NPA medics and were helped onto a vehicle and brought to a nearby hospital, with Capilio accompanying them.

Prior to this, the NPA confiscated seven firearms including three M16s, an M14, a shotgun and two pistols from four policemen in a raid on the 110th PNP Provincial Mobile Group detachment in Barangay Magdum, Tagum City, Davao del Norte at 10 p.m. on November 8 without firing a single shot.

Red fighters ambush police elements in Quezon

AN officer of the Philippine National Police 415th Provincial Mobile Group was killed and three others were wounded in the NPA ambush before midnight of November 19 in Barangay Lumington, Tiaong, Quezon. Six policemen were aboard a mobile patrol car when they were ambushed. The Red fighters captured a policeman but released him shortly afterwards. They seized an M16 and a pistol from the PNP.

Before this, two soldiers were wounded when the NPA exploded a command-detonated land mine in Barangay Bataan, Sampaloc in the same province on November 18.

Harassment operations

THREE enemy forces were killed and three others were wounded in two separate NPA harassment operations in Nueva Ecija and Sorsogon in October and November. Meanwhile, a pistol was confiscated from a policeman in Catanduanes.

In Nueva Ecija, a policeman was killed while three others were wounded when Red fighters fired on a jeep at a PNP checkpoint in Barangay Sto. Cristo, Gapan on November 16.

Before this, in Sorsogon, a three-man team of NPA guerrillas harassed Philippine Army soldiers conducting operations in Barangay Bigen, Bulan on the night of October 17. Two soldiers were confirmed dead.

Meanwhile, the NPA confiscated a 9 mm pistol from a PNP element in Baras, Catanduanes on October 9. AB

Evidence of anomalies, corruption and atrocities presented at CCTA

Despite disruptions, sabotage and Malacañang's continued derision, the Citizens' Congress for Truth and Accountability (CCTA) succeeded in hearing complaints against Gloria Arroyo in sessions on November 8, 9, 15 and 16 attended by approximately 400 delegates. Former Vice President Teofisto Guingona presided over the hearings.

Cases concerning fraud perpetrated by the Arroyo regime in the last elections, human rights violations and corruption were lodged with the CCTA. They were the same cases filed in the impeachment proceedings against Arroyo. The CCTA gave Arroyo an opportunity to defend herself but a Malacañang official rudely tore up the formal invitation for her or her representative to appear at the hearings.

Supporting evidence was submitted and carefully analyzed by the CCTA in using standards followed in regular courts.

After the hearings, the CCTA will make its recommendations and call on the Filipino people to take action. It is the people themselves who will judge Arroyo and mete out the appropriate punishment.

Blatant electoral fraud. Cases of fraud in the 2004 elections were heard on November 8 at the UP Theater in Diliman. Former Solicitor General Frank Chavez presented several documents showing how Gloria Arroyo perpetrated

rampant electoral fraud in Cebu, Bohol, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Pampanga, Ilocos Sur and Southern Leyte.

Among those who testified was former chief of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Documents Section Segundo Tabayoyong, who analyzed election-related documents. Tabayoyong pointed out indicators of doctored election returns.

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) chair Danilo Ramos also took the stand and testified that Arroyo's camp used the Ginintuang Masagang Ani (dubbed as the "fertilizer funds") for its election campaigns. Ramos said that not a single member of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas received funds or fertilizer from the ₱1.828 billion released by the Department of Budget and Management in 2004. Ramos also testified that the funds were released during harvest time when peasants had no need for fertilizer.

Meanwhile, NAMFREL observer and computer expert Roberto Verzola presented his computations showing how four million votes were shaved off from candidate Fernando Poe Jr. and counted in Arroyo's favor.

Rampant human rights violations. The CCTA next heard cases pertaining to widespread human rights violations. According to Human Rights Alliance-KARAPATAN secretary general Marie Hilao-Enriquez, there have been 4,692 violations since Arroyo held office on January 20, 2001 to September 30, 2005. They included killings, attempted murder, forced disappearances, torture, illegal arrest, indiscriminate firing and forced evacuation.

There are at present 262,000 individuals and 28,000 families in 460 communities victimized by intensified militarization, especial-

ly in Southern Tagalog, Eastern Visayas and Southern Mindanao. Records show that 410 have been killed, 153 abducted, and 21 human rights volunteers murdered. Elements of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) and paid vigilantes have been pinpointed as the perpetrators, as authenticated by fact sheets, affidavits, death certificates, medico-legal reports, reports of fact-finding missions and police blotters.

Rep. Satur C. Ocampo also stated that 80 Bayan Muna leaders and members have become victims of political assassination. He said the AFP and other armed followers of the state have been directing the murder of leaders and members of democratic and progressive organizations on orders of the Arroyo regime.

Among those who testified was 14-year-old Adelyn Albarillo, who, at the age of 10 witnessed how elements of the 204th Bde mercilessly killed her parents in San Teodoro, Oriental Mindoro on April 28, 2002. Christine Abalos of Catbalogan, Samar also recounted how the military seized and killed her father Patricio Abalos, leader of the local cooperative. Rene Galang, president of the United Luisita Workers Union recalled how military, police and security guards dispersed and indiscriminately fired upon strikers in Hacienda Luisita, Inc. in Tarlac City on November 16, 2004. Seven strikers were killed and many were wounded in the bloody dispersal.



Corruption and other anomalies. Former Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD) secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman admitted how she served as an instrument for rampant fraud in the past election. She disclosed that the Cabinet approved Arroyo's election scheme to distribute five million Philippine Health Insurance (PhilHealth) cards worth ₱1,600 each and effective for one year. She herself distributed 3,000 PhilHealth cards in Pangasinan, Fernando Poe, Jr.'s home province. Soliman apologized to the Filipino people before the CCTA for her part in betraying the public trust.

Meanwhile, Migrante International secretary general Maita Santiago testified that the government earned ₱1,237,004,100 from the Welfare Fund Contribution of overseas contract workers and ₱830,299,200 from the OCW's Medicare Fund. The funds were diverted purportedly for the "large-scale evacuation of OCWs from Iraq" and the "Classroom Galing sa Mamamayang Pilipino sa Abroad" (CGMA) project. Santiago likewise said that based on available documents, ₱530,382,446 was transferred from the Overseas Workers Welfare Fund to the PhilHealth Insurance Fund on February 2, 2004.

An almost complete picture is now emerging from these separate pieces of evidence of the Arroyo government's corruption and anomalies. Nonetheless, with many more wanting to testify, another hearing has been set on November 23. The CCTA is expected to tackle other cases of corruption, including, among others, the NorthRail Transit and the Venable LLP contract. **AB**

The Arroyo regime: Cornered

Successive crises from within and outside the ruling classes and even from its US imperialist master continue to batter the Arroyo regime.

The opposition divulged in November the existence of three separate documents containing US imperialism's assessment of the country's present situation and its local puppet's standing. Arroyo is portrayed in these documents as an ineffective caretaker of the ruling system. They belittled Arroyo's competence as an economist for her inability to solve the country's financial crisis. The US also assailed the regime's corruption, citing the many exposés of anomalies.

Amid all this, Arroyo hurriedly dispatched Foreign Affairs secretary Roberto Romulo to assuage her master, negotiate for her longer stay in power, and seek a secure exit plan should she be ousted from Malacañang.

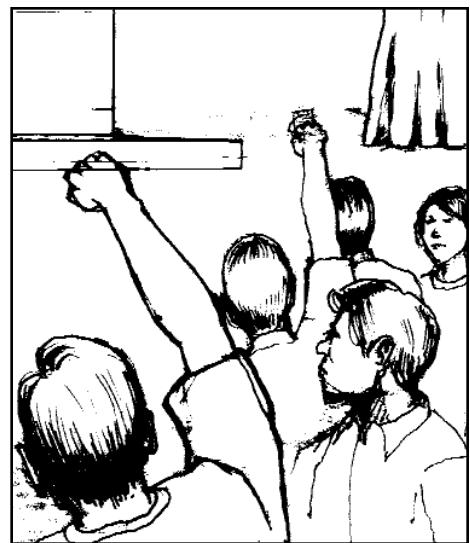
Arroyo also laid down foolproof measures to ensure that politicians posing as her allies would not betray her. Her own camp disclosed that former president Fidel Ramos had attempted to launch a coup d'état last June. Arroyo threatened those planning to oust her through violent means, saying she was prepared to retaliate with even harsher violence. National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales spread stories about an alleged coup plot called the "September Attacks" and used this as pretext to implement various repressive measures against all those opposed to Arroyo's rule. When September rolled by and nothing happened, Arroyo then used Sen. Miriam Santiago to spread tales about Ramos' alleged plot to launch a

coup in December.

Faced with all this, Arroyo has been scrambling to cover up the scandals hounding her regime and end attempts to dredge up cases of electoral fraud and other instances of corruption. She declared this November that the "controversy" resulting from the "Gloria-Garci" tapes was a "closed chapter" and that her regime would no longer respect legal moves to revive cases of election fraud based on the tapes. Congress had supposedly proven Arroyo's legitimacy when her minions juked the impeachment complaint. The Arroyo camp has likewise cited a Supreme Court decision concurring with the results of Congress' Presidential Electoral Board, which thereby reaffirmed Arroyo's status. Besides, Malacañang claimed, the opposition has failed to mount mammoth rallies.

No matter Arroyo's dogged efforts, however, the significant issues that have been drawn up against her are not about to fade away. Senate investigations continue to reveal details on how Arroyo anomalously diverted hundreds of millions of pesos worth of funds earmarked for peasants' fertilizer subsidies so she could use them in her electoral campaign. The Senate has likewise been relentless in its investigation of anomalies related to the malversation of PhilHealth funds also for the election and the regime's illegal use of ₱27 billion out of the Marcoses' ₱35 billion ill-gotten wealth supposedly held in escrow in a bank. It has heard witnesses testify on how Gloria Arroyo's husband Mike committed bribery and poll fraud in Lanao during the 2004 elections.

In Congress, a report drafted by



the five committees investigating the "Hello, Garci?" tapes has castigated the Arroyo regime for intentionally covering up the truth on the scandal. This, despite Malacañang's control over the majority in Congress and in spite of efforts by Arroyo and her minions to edit this out before the final report comes out. The Arroyo camp took pains to suppress the report even if it did not have any teeth as it did not specify whether Arroyo was legally liable when she called up Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano at the height of the canvassing during the 2004 elections.

Various sectors continue to launch mass actions exposing Arroyo and her minions and demanding that they be held accountable for their major crimes against the people. Most prominent of these moves are the hearings held by the Citizens' Congress for Truth and Accountability (CCTA) in recent weeks which the people have taken up in lieu of the impeachment process. This directly belies Arroyo's presumption that her crimes against the people could simply be buried deep in the recesses of the nation's collective memory.

AB

Most recent political killings

SEVEN progressive leaders in Central Luzon, Bicol and Eastern Visayas were killed in succession in November by death squads directed by the military.

The bodies of the couple Danilo and Maribel Supeña, both Bayan Muna (BM) members were found stuffed into sacks in Barangay Pinili, San Jose City, Nueva Ecija on November 20. They were abducted on October 26.

Meanwhile, Rommel Arcilla, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) member was shot dead along the Guagua-Floridablanca intersection in Pampanga on November 21.

On November 19, Kadamay organizer and Bayan Muna member Errol "Reymund" Sending was murdered in Barangay Lourdes Sur, Angeles City. He sustained five bullet wounds.

In Sorsogon City, Ricardo Uy, a Bayan Muna officer of the city was shot in front of his own house. Uy died immediately after sustaining five bullet wounds. He was also a broadcaster at the local radio station and was known for assailing the military's human rights violations in the region.

Three men on board a motorcycle also shot dead Bienvenido Bajado, BAYAN-Eastern Samar chair, BAYAN-Eastern Visayas council member and former vice mayor of Maydolong, Eastern Samar. Prior to this, two men also shot dead Jose Ducalang, Bayan Muna municipal coordinator in Ormoc City and an employee of the local city government.

With the killing of the Supena couple, 71 Bayan Muna officials and members have already been murdered since Arroyo assumed office. Twenty-five BM leaders have been slain this year alone.

Violence in Hacienda Luisita

BRIG. Gen. Jovito Palparan's men illegally arrested eleven residents of Hacienda Luisita in Barangay Balite, Tarlac City on November 15, the eve of the first anniversary of the massacre of seven mill and farm workers in the hacienda.

Palparan accused those arrested, including a 12-year-old child, of planning an armed and violent operation against military forces. Because there was no shred of evidence supporting his accusations, Palparan was forced to order the immediate release of eight of those picked up.

He filed trumped up charges of illegal possession of firearms against the remaining three.

EVAT and pegged wages

A double whammy on the toiling masses

Gloria Arroyo made a show of supporting a legislated wage increase in a bid to deceive the people and douse cold water on their rising anger brought about by the EVAT's implementation.

In the face of the people's intense denunciation of the EVAT's harsh blows on their economic status, Arroyo feigned a pro-worker stance and in November twice talked about the need for a wage increase. But she immediately abandoned the stance after meeting stiff opposition from big businessmen supportive of her regime and all its policies.

Arroyo's officials tried to make excuses for the turnaround, saying that the mass media and everyone else simply misunderstood what she meant. They claimed that Arroyo actually called on Congress to ensure compliance with existing wage laws. Next came supporting statements insisting that a wage increase would not benefit the country.

Business' welfare before that of the toiling masses. In chorus with big capitalists, Arroyo declared that a wage increase would not be timely, would only repel foreign businessmen, and based on her assessment as economist, would even be detrimental to workers! Big businessmen allied with Arroyo likewise warned about massive layoffs in the event of a wage hike.

Businessmen are completely against a legislated across-the-board wage increase and are more inclined to address wage issues through the regional wage boards (RWB) which they control. The RWBs are trilateral bodies composed of representatives of yellow labor unions, capitalists and government.

For the past several years, the RWBs served as instruments to prevent wage increases. They ordered insultingly minuscule wage increases ranging from ₱6 to ₱25 in June and July in various regions in the face of widespread calls for a ₱125 raise in the daily minimum wage.

Arroyo's specious offer to exempt workers from paying withholding tax in lieu of a wage increase is even more insulting.



Spiraling prices, meager wages. The minimum wage of workers in Metro Manila is currently pegged at ₱275 a day aside from a ₱50 Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) that may be withheld by capitalists any time under various pretexts. The ₱180 minimum daily wage in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao is the country's lowest. Worse, capitalists seldom comply even with such meager minimum wage levels.

Workers have been demanding a ₱125 increase in their daily wage and government employees a ₱3,000 increase in their monthly salary for almost a decade now. The tiny increases in workers' wages and government employees' salaries have not kept pace with the rapidly spiraling prices of goods and services, especially with the EVAT's implementation this November and the fact that it is set to be scaled up to 12% from the present 10% in January 2006. No less than the National Wages and Productivity Commission said in September that a family of six in Metro Manila needs ₱681 a day to live decently.

Meanwhile, prices of basic goods and services needed by the people rise continuously.

It is no surprise that more and more people are impoverished. The latest Pulse Asia survey revealed that 75% of Filipinos see themselves as poor or very poor. **AB**

Electricity charges rise anew

The 10% Expanded Value Added Tax (EVAT) imposed on November 1 has led to hikes in electricity charges and will spur even more increases. An estimated 1.2 million Manila Electric Co. consumers using up to 200 kilowatt-hours (kWh) a month will pay an additional ₱108.35 in November. They comprise 31.8% of the total number of Meralco's consumers in Metro Manila and nearby provinces. Those who used to pay ₱1,554 will now be shelling out ₱1,662.35 (or a 6.97% increase).

Meanwhile, those who consume 50 kWh will be paying ₱11.48 more (from ₱189.46 to ₱200.94) while those who use 100 kWh will be paying an additional ₱41.13 (₱651.76, up from ₱610.63). Charges will once again rise with the slated VAT increase from 10% to 12% at the start of 2006.

Aside from the EVAT-triggered hikes, consumers will also be paying more because of bigger Napocor charges. Napocor plans to collect up to ₱19 billion from consumers by slapping them with an additional 45 centavos per kWh in Luzon, 64 centavos per kWh in the Visayas and 51 centavos per kWh in Mindanao.

It is the people who will surely bear the brunt of the higher Napocor charges since it supplies Meralco and other electric companies and cooperatives that deliver electricity to homes and businesses.

Massacre in Pasig

Another instance of state brutality and fascism came to public view when elements of the Philippine National Police-Traffic Management Group (PNP-TMG) shot to death three unarmed men on November 7 on Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City. A UNTV cameraman recorded the incident on video. Aside from the cameraman, a former mayor, passersby and a taxi driver witnessed the event.



Witnesses said policemen aboard a van first pursued and fired at a car with some men on board. The men were cornered and after a few minutes were seen lying still inside the vehicle.

What happened next were recorded on video. The policemen were caught on film shooting the three men lying inside the vehicle one by one. In one scene, one of the men moved his hand and head slightly before TMG personnel mowed him down. With the video clearly showing that the three men were unarmed, police claims that the victims resisted are incredible. That the police allegedly retrieved car plates from the vehicle is also doubtful since the video footages also showed the police placing something at the back of the car.

In a desperate bid to cover up the outright violation of the rules of engagement, PNP officials wove a tangled web of excuses as they insisted that the three men were armed and shot it out with the police.

The PNP and high-ranking officials of the regime are now in a mad scramble to cover up the policemen's crime. They tried to stop the investigation and concealed important pieces of evidence that would have proven that what occurred was a massacre and not an encounter.

Police harassed the witnesses and warned them against testifying. The PNP even had the gall to threaten the person who shot and showed the video of the massacre for refusing to turn over the master tapes to the PNP. The PNP was merely forced to go through the motions of conducting an investigation and suspend the policemen involved after the shooting and *cont'd at page 9*

Enrile to ravage the forests of Samar anew

A strict logging ban has been in force in Samar for the past sixteen years. Samareños have expressed widespread opposition to logging in the island due to successive landslides resulting from the denudation of their forests. But all this will change if Gloria Arroyo and her partner in crime Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile had their way.

Reports revealed in August that the Arroyo government had granted permission to the San Jose Timber Corporation (SJTC) to resume logging in the island. By granting a permit, Arroyo was clearly returning a political favor to SJTC owner Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile for his support amid the scandals hounding her regime. Arroyo has, with the stroke of a pen demolished the gains accumulated by the people in their long struggle against environmental destruction, all for the sake of prolonging herself in power. The regime has once again placed the island in danger of massive flooding.

from page 8

its aftermath were roundly condemned by the public.

The policemen's massacre of three men accused as criminals by the police was brutal in the extreme. The PNP trampled on every known rule on dealing with suspects or even criminals. Only a few hours after the incident, Arroyo even lauded it as one of the victories of her anti-crime program. Despite all the denunciations, not only were the policemen involved absolved of any wrongdoing, the massacre has even been justified. **AB**

The Arroyo-Enrile collusion demonstrates the depth and breadth of the regime's corruption and its unabashed resort to everything in its arsenal—large sums of money, powerful positions, tantalizing privileges and lucrative concessions—just to win over and neutralize the reactionary opposition even in piecemeal fashion, in its desperate bid to stay in power. Prior to this, Arroyo had already opened Samar's mountains and plains to exploitation by various foreign mining companies.

The permit issued to SJTC to resume logging in Samar in effect revokes the log ban ordered by former Pres. Corazon Aquino on February 8, 1989. Aquino ordered the ban after Eastern and Northern Samar suffered five days of massive floods and landslides that killed over 180 people in the two provinces. Up to 33 towns went under water and over ₱100 million worth of crops were damaged. A serious food shortage followed, causing widespread starvation.

The SJTC's Timber License Agreement (TLA) covers 95,770 hectares right smack in the middle of the 333,000-hectare Samar Island Nature Park (SINP). Part of the area that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has opened to the SJTC lies within a forest reserve—the only remaining lush forest area in the island. This forest, which straddles the three provinces of Samar, Northern Samar and Eastern Samar,

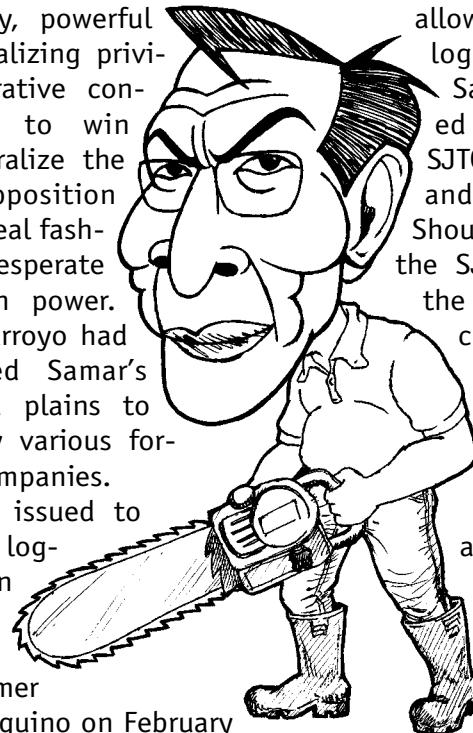
is home to many endangered flora and fauna. Arroyo herself officially declared the vast forest a protected park on August 13, 2003.

Now, not only has the DENR allowed SJTC to resume logging activities in Samar, it has extended the effectivity of SJTC's TLA to 16 years and three months. Should this materialize, the SJTC will be logging the area until 2021—compensation no doubt for all the years its operations were banned in the island!

SJTC's logging activities will destroy a number of important watersheds within the SINP and imperil the water supply in all three provinces of Samar. It will also run roughshod over an extensive irrigation project in Northern Samar that relies on these watersheds. This project is expected to supply irrigation water to the area's upland communities.

Aside from ordinary Samareños, church officials and religious groups, environmentalists, local officials of the provinces, and even the Regional Development Council of Eastern Visayas are strongly opposed to SJTC's resumption of logging.

Bishops Jose Palma of Calbayog, Leonardo Medroso of Borongan, Emmanuel Trance of Cataraman and Bishop Emeritus Angel Hobayan of Cataraman have all expressed strong opposition through pastoral letters. Forty-five priests from 25 parishes have also



assailed the SJTC through a joint statement. In Tacloban City, the Samahan han Gudti nga Paraguma han Sinirangan Bisayans (SAGUPA) condemned Arroyo's shameless maneuver to offer the island's forests as a bribe to Enrile. They plan to launch an anti-logging caravan on December 1, to be participated in by people from the three Samar provinces. The Samar Island Biodiversity Foundation will also be launching similar protest actions.

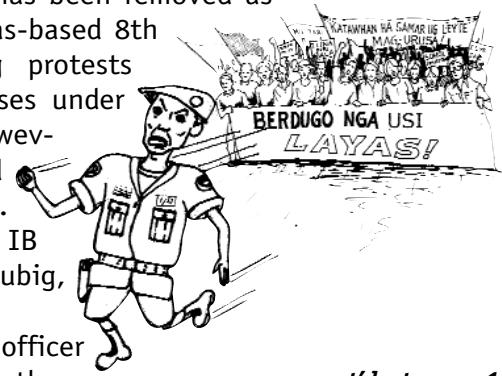
The revolutionary movement in Samar has likewise condemned Arroyo and Enrile's maneuvers to destroy not only Samar's environment but also the lives and livelihood of Samareños. In contrast to the reactionary regime's programs, the revolutionary movement in Samar enforces a strict ban on large-scale commercial logging for export, the business SJTC is engaged in. All it allows is limited and responsible logging for local needs, such as constructing houses and furniture. The revolutionary movement advocates an extensive education and mass movement for the protection of forests and for reforestation, and the development of alternative livelihood to raise the economic standing of people who depend on logging.

Together with the people of Samar, the revolutionary movement is ready to do everything to stop SJTC's operations and other activities detrimental harmful to the island's forests and mountains. The New People's Army's will contribute to this effort by confiscating equipment from anyone engaged in illegal and large-scale, commercial logging, thus ensuring their inability to use them again. **AB**

Palparan's running-dog driven out of Northern Samar

Brig. Gen. Jovito Palparan has been removed as chief of the Eastern Visayas-based 8th ID because of mounting protests against intensified military abuses under his leadership. After leaving, however, General Palparan left behind his rabid minion Lt. Col. Manueltito Usi, chief of the 63rd IB based in Barangay Opong, Catubig, Northern Samar.

Usi is one other military officer abhorred by the people of Northern



cont'd at page 11

SJTC's bloody record

The SJTC has a long and bloody record in Samar. It has earned notoriety for perpetrating massive landgrabbing of peasants' lands. From the 1970's to 1989, it wantonly denuded the island's forests. It was also notorious for colluding with the Marcos dictatorship in repressing and abusing the people. The corporation's security force served as the private army of then Marcos defense minister Juan Ponce Enrile. It committed many human rights violations, including the heinous massacres in Las Navas and Maslog.

An 18-man group of the AFP's Special Forces that was given free rein to pose as a "Lost Command" mercilessly killed over 40 people, including children and infants on September 15, 1981 in Sag-od, Las Navas, Northern Samar. Sag-od residents who had been working for SJTC were then simply demanding just wages and humane treatment.

As early as 1973, Enrile formed the group that massacred the Sag-od residents as a special counter-

revolutionary force led by Col. Carlos Lademora. He patterned the group after "Lost Commands" set up by the US Special Forces during the Vietnam War. Enrile used Lademora's "Lost Command" to defend his own interests, attack the NPA and MNLF and their mass bases, and unleash terror in Mindanao and Samar.

Meanwhile, in 1982, Enrile's goons killed over 10 peasants in Sitio Tamay, Barangay Karayakay, Maslog, Eastern Samar. They were buried alive in a huge dugout used as a dumping area for logs. Enrile vented his ire on these peasants because they joined mass actions against the SJTC to assail the loss of their livelihood after SJTC prevented them from entering the forests to eke out a living.

More than two decades have passed, but the SJTC criminals, the corporation's goons and top man Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, have gone unpunished. Neither the victims nor their families have received any assistance or indemnification.

Samar because of numerous human rights violations he and his men have committed. One of Usi's latest abuses is the killing of Jolito Tabino, a member of the Anak ng Bayan Youth Party. Tabino, 26, was abducted on September 2 in Barangay Bagacay, Palapag. Residents of nearby Barangay Osmeña found his body on September 10 with plastic strips still wrapped around the neck. Tabino's body had many wounds—indicating that he was tortured before he was killed.

After this incident, Usi claimed in his weekly program over a local radio station in Catarman that Tabino was killed by Red fighters even if Bagacay residents knew full well that it was the military that abducted him. But no matter what yarns Usi spins, the people of Northern Samar could see through the bloodthirsty 63rd IB chief's tricks.

Prior to this, the 63rd IB under Usi's leadership committed another heinous crime—strafing the home of the Conge family in Barangay Uno, Catubig, Northern Samar in August 2004, killing Mely Conge who was four months pregnant and seriously wounding her husband and their three children. Several witnesses, including the surviving members of the Conge family, attest that it was the handiwork of CAFGU and 63rd IB elements. But as expected of Usi, he blamed the NPA for the massacre. The Conge family still cries out for justice.

Indicating the 63rd IB's blatant abuse for the people, they station themselves in barangay halls, day care centers and chapels in farflung villages of Bobon and Catarman, and even painted camouflage patterns on the buildings.

Not only ordinary civilians are victimized. Even local officials suspected of supporting the revolutionary movement, like Ferdinand Avila of San Isidro, Nicolas Porog of Victoria, Laureana Suan of Allen, Linda Cinco of Lope de Vega and Francisco Rosales of Catarman, who have likewise been harassed by the 63rd IB, as have church people, professors and media people.

The AFP was forced to remove Usi as 63rd IB chief in November due to intense condemnation by the people of Northern Samar for his detestable crimes and those of other officers and men under his command.

AB

People's army attacks jail in India

ONE thousand fighters of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) attacked a jail in the town of Jehanabad in Bihar state on November 13, freeing 400 jailed revolutionaries, activists and other supporters of the revolutionary movement in India. The PLGA is the revolutionary army of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) or CPI(M). It was formed when the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)(People's War) and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI) merged on September 21, 2004.

PLGA guerrillas have a strong mass base in a number of India states, including Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Chhattisgarh, where the peasant movement has been active since 1970. Three hundred guerrillas also raided a police academy in Jharkhand state last week. Five police cadets were killed in the attack.

500,000 workers protest in Australia

BUSINESSES in Australia's main cities were practically at a standstill on November 15 when up to 500,000 Australian workers poured into the streets in 300 coordinated mobilizations to protest anti-worker "labor reforms" legislated by Prime Minister John Howard's government. The mass mobilization is regarded as the largest in the history of the Australian labor movement. High-ranking officials of Australia's six states supported the gigantic mass action.

At the core of Howard's "reforms" is an attack on organized workers and their unions. Howard is pushing for the "decentralization of industrial negotiations" to eliminate the high-level collective bargaining practiced by workers and their unions. The "reforms" would prevent the merger of unions in industrial and national federations, and limit negotiations to individual workers or unions. This way, it would be easier for capitalists to coerce separate individual organizations in each factory. This would destroy the unions and deny the workers the right to self-organization and collective bargaining.

Howard is also pushing for the legalization of labor contractualization and granting greater powers to capitalists to terminate workers. Workers say this is a violation of their right to job security as well as other rights and would only worsen the already deplorable labor conditions.

UN junks US blockade of Cuba

THE United Nations General Assembly once again condemned and called for an end to the 40-year US econ-

ic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba last November 9. Almost all of the members voted to end the blockade which has contributed in a big way to the hardships suffered by Cuba. Up to 182 countries voted to lift the blockade, while four—the US, Israel, Palau and the Marshall Islands—voted to maintain it.

Under the US-initiated blockade implemented in October 1960, expanded in 1962, and perpetuated in subsequent years, the US has banned US companies and citizens from engaging in any trade, invest-

ment or financial transaction with Cuba.

US president George W. Bush ordered additional restrictions and repressive policies against Cuba in October 2003, among them imposing more restrictions on travel to Cuba, prohibiting US-based Cubans from sending remittances and intensifying a smear campaign against President Fidel Castro's government.

Cuba estimates that the blockade has cost the Cuban government over \$70 billion in losses, including

loss of export earnings, additional importation costs, the stunted development of the Cuban economy, and other losses suffered by the people.

President Castro and the Cuban people warmly received the UN General Assembly's support and its opposition to the long history of US imperialist repression and the hardships imposed on their country. Cuban officials assert that the blockade is a cruel policy that is not supported by people within and outside the US.